

Why I Hate Steve Harrington by flippyspoon

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Summary:

Billy writes a list.

Why I Hate Steve Harrington

Author's Note:

10 Things I Hate About You Vibes (although I've only seen it once).

I'm Billy Hargrove. I don't get flustered.

He kept thinking this to himself, and yet Billy Hargrove kept getting flustered.

It happened whenever Steve Harrington said something nice to Billy which, inexplicably, he kept doing. Even though they weren't anything more than acquaintances really, teammates, people near each other at school, quasi-rivals.

It wasn't as if other people didn't say nice things to Billy sometimes. Never at home. His father had used to dole out the occasional bit of approval like some miser relinquishing a penny, and Billy had always savored it and felt shitty afterwards for how much he wanted it. Girls and kiss-asses. That's where Billy got his praise. It didn't mean much, thought it felt fucking great for a minute there. "You're so hot" coming from some girl he didn't care about and fawning admiration from a desperate toady trying to catch a little bit of his heat. Billy thrived on it, it wasn't as if there was any alternative. He might have gotten a good word from a teacher or a coach now and then if his attitude wasn't so shitty.

"Nice play," Steve Harrington said, casually, catching his breath. He was grinning even, but it *had* been a good game and Billy had saved them at the end. They'd both played very well.

Billy watched Steve Harrington pull at the collar of his t-shirt, cooling himself.

Nice play.

Billy had blinked at him for a second, his cheeks heating up.

He smirked and threw out, "Oh gee, thanks, Harrington." He didn't even know what attitude he was going for. It didn't seemed to bother Steve.

He'd been into Harrington since Day 1. He'd been so into Harrington he'd had to beat the shit out of Harrington in an attempt to prove he was not into Harrington, to protect himself from the terror of it. He had failed.

Harrington had never said anything nice before. Why the fuck should he? Billy had said nice things to him. Technically. They might have sounded less than nice the way he said them.

Nice play.

Billy thought of "nice play" for days. He lay in bed, metal blaring in his earphones, and thought of Steve's crazy post-game sweaty hair, and his goofy grin, and the way he'd said "nice play" like they were old pals.

The second nice thing Steve said to Billy happened when Billy was waiting for Max outside the arcade. He came to pick her up early with no intention of rushing her, he'd just wanted to get out of the house and was content enough to lean on the car and smoke. Steve came driving up then to give one of the other nerd kids a ride. He asked Billy for a smoke and leaned against the car with him. They didn't talk and Steve seemed comfortable in the silence, but Billy was edgy. He took out his Zippo and flipped it open and closed a few times and did an old Zippo trick he'd learned (he'd picked up a few), flipping it between his fingers while lit, spinning it, and then flicking it closed.

Steve watched him.

"Whoa, that was so cool," Steve said brightly.

Billy almost dropped the lighter.

"Yeah, I know," he said, not looking up at Steve.

"Do you now anymore tricks?"

By the third trick, the kids had come out and they crowded around and watched Billy do Zippo tricks and he felt for a minute what it was like to be “one of the gang”--even if the “gang” was a bunch of dumb kids and their...babysitter (weren't they too old for that?)--and to be the cool guy they knew who could do Zippo tricks and not an asshole maniac they feared. It felt okay.

Whoa, that was so cool.

It was like gold. Billy wanted more.

Billy's hair had grown out a bit and his father was being a dick about it and told him to get a cut. Billy heaved a sigh and got a layered thing, fuller than his old cut, it just barely hit his shoulders. He'd been pissed about it but then again it was hardly what his father had asked for and it looked good on him anyway, especially when he styled it. He'd made sure to point out to Neil that he'd just pulled a 4.0 and the matter was dropped. It was shorter after all. When Billy showed up at school with the new cut, he turned a few heads and when Steve saw him he stopped cold in the doorway of second period and blinked.

“That looks good,” Steve mumbled.

Billy almost smiled but he swallowed instead. For him that was tantamount to cartoon hearts and birds circling his head.

“Thanks, Harrington.” He tossed Steve a wink. Steve turned a little pink.

That looks good.

Somewhere along the line Billy forgot how to say nice things to Steve Harrington because when he was about to he couldn't sum up any lewd snarkiness to cover for it and then would just sound like he was...saying nice things to Steve Harrington. For some reason, he could not stand to do that. Then Steve Harrington would *have* him, would *know*, would run the game. Billy could barely make his mouth even work around Steve Harrington anymore and it was getting to be a problem.

In study hall one day he caught himself blatantly staring at Steve Harrington who could probably feel the eyes on him. Billy looked away and huffed, throwing open his notebook.

Billy Hargrove didn't get flustered except now he did. Now everything was *ruined*.

Billy wanted to tell Steve Harrington exactly what was so goddamn great about him and also he wanted Steve Harrington to suffer for knowing.

Billy started writing in his notebook, arm at an awkward angle because there were never any lefty desks at stupid Hawkins High and the meat of his palm was forever smudged with ink.

WHY I HATE STEVE HARRINGTON

Billy wrote a list. He started writing and didn't pause for a second and covered the entire page and then the bell rang, or he would've gone on to another page. He ripped the page out of his notebook and stood, intending to throw it away, except that then Steve Harrington was staring at *him* from across the room with this gigantic soft brown eyes. Billy almost tripped. He fumbled with his notebook, cursing, and crumpled up a paper and threw it away.

It was not the right paper. His brain was somewhere in space. He threw out a page of notes from Chem. and forgot about the list entirely when he realized he was on his way to gym, which meant a shower with Steve Harrington and that was always equal parts an *ordeal* and the joy of fucking spring.

Billy forgot all about the list until the next morning.

The next morning Billy went into school and...the list was everywhere.

Billy didn't know what was going on at first. He only saw sheets of copy paper taped up all over the place (he thought dimly of the Byers' insane house the night of that fight). Papers were taped to the trophy cases and taped over the fliers for the next bake sale and taped to the doors of classrooms and taped to practically everyone's locker. Everyone was reading the papers. Everyone was gasping and laughing and the place was abuzz. For one unterrifying second Billy put it down to Hawkins being weird as hell and then he thought maybe there would be some kind of advantage in whatever the drama was, his ears perking up, and *then* he reached his own locker and found the list.

WHY I HATE STEVE HARRINGTON.

Billy's stomach and heart and lungs and brain and even his dick felt as if they were dropping slowly to the floor. His blood ran cold not unlike it did when he heard his father's footsteps coming down the hall. It took him a second to realize that his own name was not on the list (still though, he felt a curious tingling in his eye sockets just thinking about the implications). It was obvious reading the thing though, that it had been written by a boy. Which mattered...since the title "WHY I HATE STEVE HARRINGTON" was rather deceptive. Somebody had *found* it and somebody had decided everyone needed to read it and Billy could see why. It was the fodder for legend, especially in a boring place like Hawkins High.

WHY I HATE STEVE HARRINGTON:

- his mouth
- his dumb Bambi eyes
- his fucking face
- his stupid hair
- his big dick
- his long fingers

- his dumb smile
- his hot ass
- his arms
- his shoulders
- his back
- his moles
- the way he smells after a shower
- the way he smells before a shower
- he bites his lip when he's nervous
- his stupid hair flops over into his face and he shoves it back and it flops over again
- that stupid goofy grin he gets on his face when he dances
- the way he takes off his goddamn Ray-Bans like an asshole
- the way he fills out his jeans (see also: big dick)
- the way he jumps into a fight he knows he's going to lose like an idiot
- when he plays tough
- rubs the back of his neck
- sticks his pen between his lips while he's thinking
- sticks his tongue out a little when he's concentrating
- when he says something dumb (he looks pretty)
- when he says something NICE and i feel like a person
- UGH BEAUTIFUL

-the way he runs

-he gives away practically all his food to other people at lunch (doesn't the dummy eat?)

-the way he sings under his breath like nobody can hear him (i can)

-when he looks at you and for a second nobody else exists on earth but him and you

-would probably die for his friends. almost has.

-makes me feel like a guilty pathetic piece of shit for ever hurting him. probably has no idea.

-his laugh(s) (there are 5 of them, 3 of them are for real)

-i didn't give a shit and now i do and fuck him for making me like this

-has my heart by the balls. that doesn't even make sense. but fuck if it's not true.

That was it. That was the list. None of it was anything he could even dimly imagine admitting to anyone and now the entire school was reading it. Billy held a copy in his hand and heard people talking about it all around him, a roar in his ears. He was afraid to even look for Steve.

But Steve wouldn't know it was him. Nobody would. Nobody but teachers knew his handwriting unless somebody showed Max the letter all the way over at the Middle School. She'd recognize it immediately. But for now, for all Steve knew fucking Tommy *could* have written it. Byers even. Anybody.

"Steve, you *have* to want to know who it was!" That was Princess Wheeler. Billy turns his head just slightly as he shoved books into his bag. Byers, Wheeler, and a couple of Wheeler's friends had Steve cornered at his locker. Steve looked like a deer in headlights, a copy of the list in his fist.

“Eh...” Steve shrugged. “It’s some dumb joke.”

“I don’t think so,” Byers said with a little snort. “It’s more like a love letter. Kind of a good one.”

“Mmm.” Steve looked like he *agreed* with Byers. He even *smiled* a little as he looked at the list and then he turned his head and met Billy’s eyes.

Billy looked away too fast. He should have smirked. He should laughed in Steve’s face. He’d fucked up already. He should’ve made a joke about it, played it off.

Fuck .

His ears were blazing hot. Billy shouldered his bag and all but ran to class. On the way he punched a locker, terrifying a shrumpy freshman. He growled at the freshman, who scuttled away. At least it made him feel a little better even if it bloodied his knuckles a little.

“Hey!” That was Tommy leaning over his desk to pester Billy. “Any idea who wrote the list?”

“How the hell should I know?” Billy said back.

“It was right about one thing,” Tommy snarked. “Steve is dumb.”

“Shut the fuck up, Tommy!” Billy snapped and sat back in his desk, pinching the bridge of his nose.

Talk about the list reached a fever pitch by lunch and it didn’t help that Billy had to sit through classes with Steve and even the teacher commented on the excitement.

“Good morning, class,” Mrs. Simons said. “And good morning to you, Mr. Harrington. Aren’t you having an interesting day?”

The class laughed. Steve smiled, sheepish. Billy swallowed.

Somehow Steve wasn’t being overly mocked for being so...interestingly appreciated by, most likely, a boy. Steve could get the shit kicked out of him, willingly abdicate the throne, and lose the

girl of his dreams to Zombie Boy's weirdo brother and people would still think he was some sweetheart dreamboat even as he hunched his shoulders and bit his lip, eyes big and occasionally vacant. Billy couldn't disagree. It sucked.

At lunch Billy hovered in the cafeteria and was just about to go hide in his car when none other than Steve Harrington grabbed him by the elbow, ushering him to the door.

"I gotta talk to you," Steve said.

"Get your fuckin' mitts off me, Harrington!" Billy yelped, elbowing Steve in the ribs. He was glad for the first time that day he felt like his usual self. Which was comfortable if not somehow worse.

"Oh, chill out," Steve said, not seeming remotely threatened. "Come on."

"I'll kick your ass again!"

"I'll risk it. C'mon, jackass."

Steve dragged Billy into a broom closet and pulled a string light on. Steve inside a broom closet was in Billy's top ten jerk-off scenarios but he inwardly tabled that thought, although it was hard when they were squeezed in together. Steve was *barely* an inch taller than Billy. Billy had always begrudged this and usually managed to compensate via boots but today he was wearing sneakers and it felt as if Steve loomed over him, him and his tall hair.

"Did you write it?" Steve said, crossing his arms.

"You're out of your fucking mind!" Billy said, scowling.

"That's not a no."

"Harrington." Billy affected his most threatening voice, glowering at Steve. "Let me out of here right now or I swear to God—"

"I like it, by the way," Steve said. He took a folded up copy of the list out of his pocket. "I mean I've gotten love letters before..."

Oh, what a surprise , Billy thought.

"This is the best one I've ever gotten though." He waved it around.
"It's so...real."

He likes it . Billy heart gave a little leap.

"It was probably written by a guy," Billy said, slightly testing the waters. "You still dig it if it was written by a guy?"

"It was definitely written by a guy and yeah." He looked straight at Billy. They were standing so close. Steve was blocking the door. "I do. Especially the part about 'I didn't give a shit and now I do...'" He grinned at Billy. "I like that."

"You would," Billy said, rolling his eyes.

"Course 'heart by the balls...' Now that's poetry."

Billy was red hot. He stifled a smile. "I guess."

"It *sounds* like you."

"Jesus Christ."

Steve gave him a long look, crowded Billy up against a supply shelf. "Hargrove. Tell me it was you." And he sounded a little raw suddenly. "Just tell me it was you."

"Why-"

"Because I *want* it to be you."

Billy couldn't breathe, couldn't remember how to speak for a moment, looking up at Steve's eyes, too big so close-up. Billy found himself sputtering, high pitched. "Nobody was supposed to see that shit-"

Steve kissed him, shutting him up all at once, cupping Billy's chin in his hand. Billy collapsed a little and Steve's arm came up around him as he teased his tongue between Billy's lips with soft little smacks of their mouths before his tongue met Billy's and he aggressively

deepened the kiss so that he really did have to hold Billy up and then he pulled back again with soft little kisses and Billy thought he'd pass the fuck out.

"Uh...okay," Billy mumbled, breathless. "Fine... Ya got me."

Steve chuckled into his neck and said, "Nice play."